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SUBJECT: STAFFDEL GARVEY MEETS WITH DEFMIN ABDUL QADR

¶1. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Professional Staff Member Patrick Garvey met with Iraqi Defense Minister Abdul Qadr Muhammed Jasim December 7 to discuss the current state of Iraqi defense forces and development efforts in the MOD. While noting the significant progress that the Iraqi military has made over the last two years, Abdul Qadr admitted that Coalition Forces' assistance would be needed for at least another year before Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) were prepared to take complete responsibility for security in Iraq.

¶2. In response to Mr. Garvey's questions on the status of the ISF, DefMin Abdul Qadr said that the Ministry of Interior had not established a proper command and control for what is in effect an Army. These problems are being resolved now, but three years has been wasted, allowing political parties and factionalism to impede the MOI. Abdul Qadr said the biggest fight for the MOD, and other ministries as well, was against corruption. It sapped the strength of the ISF and undermined popular confidence in the ISF. Abdul Qadr noted that MOD must sometimes act against criminal actors even though it has no arrest authority. He insisted the armed forces coordinate with the Ministry of Interior for subsequent criminal investigations and with the Ministry of Justice for detention or eventual incarceration.

¶3. Mr. Garvey noted that Senator Lugar supported MOD's efforts to acquire equipment from the United States to better secure Iraq's border. He applauded the MOD's efforts in this area. He encouraged MOD to take full advantage of U.S. training opportunities, including training the trainers for Iraqi training academies. Abdul Qadr responded that the Iraqi armed forces have personnel being trained in the United States and many other countries. He closed the brief meeting by noting that, with Coalition and NATO Training Mission-Iraq assistance, Iraq's own academies were making serious progress in training officers and NCOs, though the air force lags behind the army in this regard.

¶4. Mr. Garvey did not have an opportunity to review this message before departing post.

CROCKER